

The Minority Party by mcuwatcher85

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Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Karen Wheeler, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Ted Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair

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Summary:

Jonathan openly admits the people he doesn't like are the vast majority. Guess that makes the party and their supposedly grownup caretakers the minority party.

Series of short stories about Jonathan Byers interacting with his fellow Monster Hunters and Hawkins outcasts. Canon compliant as best as I can make it, and spoilers for both seasons.

Chapter 4: Bringing Home A Stray now posted

1. Brothers

Jonathan pulled his car into the Wheeler driveway on Saturday morning and glanced over at his younger brother. "You sure you're up for this Will? They will understand... it's only been two weeks since... everything." Will had been back in school for over a week, and looked healthier than he had in a full year, but his older brother couldn't help but worry.

The younger teen nodded, replying with a smile "I'm good" as he unlocked door. Jon got out to follow him inside, earning a pair of rolled brown eyes. "I can walk twenty feet to their door"

Smirking and tousling his brother's hair, the elder Byers boy admitted "Well, maybe I just want to say hello to everyone". It wasn't even entirely a lie, though if he was being completely honest there was a specific person he wanted to see badly enough to risk awkward small talk with the Wheeler parents. They hadn't spent any time together and alone since the morning after when he dropped the Wheeler's off at home and she kissed him goodbye.

However she was not home now, having gone out with her mother and Holly to shop for new clothes for the youngest, but Jonathan headed downstairs anyway after thanks Mr Wheeler for letting them in. He'd known Will's friends for years, other than the new redheaded girl who was being briefed on the basic rules of the Dungeons and Dragons game that was being setup by Mike. The entire group got up and welcomed Will back with high fives and hugs, the noise level only increasing as Jonathan hung back on the stairs for a bit, feeling a strange mix of happiness for his brother at having such a devoted group to trust in and spend time with and a hint of jealousy. His reputation as the town creep and freak had started young, and he'd never slept over at another person's house until the night a year ago with Nancy... which wasn't exactly the same for at least a dozen reasons.

"Well, have fun guys" he finally said awkwardly, reminding Will "I have your radio in the car while I'm running errands, call me if you need anything"

Will nodded and he walked back upstairs to leave through the front door, silently hoping the ladies of the house would show up before he left. They didn't, but he heard a rush of someone coming upstairs, turning to see Mike standing behind him. "Hey Jonathan" he said, glancing around to make sure Mr Wheeler didn't hear him, "Nancy told me about what you guys did. Why you weren't home when... when Will got sick"

Jonathan felt his cheeks warm up, hoping Nancy didn't share everything with Mike... even he had left a few details out when telling Will and their mother... but Mike either didn't know or didn't care about that as he added with a smile "That was really cool. I'm glad, that umm... you have her back"

Nodding, the older teen opened the door, shivering as the cold November air leaked in "No problem. And I'm glad you were looking out for Will. All of you. He's lucky to have such good friends"

With that they parted ways, and Jon made his way around town, paying bills and getting a few things for the house. It was just after noon and he was debating spending a bit of money to eat out instead of going home to eat alone when the radio in the passenger seat crackled to life "Jonathan. Come in. Over"

Suppressing the brief flash of panic, he used the controls and answered quickly "Is everything okay Will? Over", feeling his heart beat faster while imagining a hundred possible dangers.

"We need pizza. Lots of pizza. Over" came the reply a second later, the youngest Byers sounding like just another normal kid without a care in the world.

Rolling his eyes and breathing a sigh of relief, he asked "Why can't anyone there order it using a phone?", pausing before he remembered to add "Over"

It was Mike who replied this time "Because this is faster, and we will pay you back. Make sure and order enough for Nancy too. Over"

Maybe, just maybe, he had a few friends he could count on too, Jonathan thought as he pulled into the pizza place and and radioed

back "Copy that. On my way. Over" before stepping out and picking up four pizzas, silently wondering what Nancy liked on hers and resolving to ask when he got back to their basement.

2. Tutoring

Summary for the Chapter:

Time To Tutor The Town's Telekinetic Teen

Monday, December 31st 1984

It's a bit after noon on the 31st of December when the entire monster hunting crowd is finally gathered in the living room of the Byers residence, now fully cleaned up and looking frankly better than it has in years if Jonathan is being honest.

He has his arm around Nancy on his left in the two person love seat, while to his right El, Mike, Will, and Max share the sofa with Dustin and Lucas at their feet. His mother and Steve had each taken one of the chairs (Steve having turned his just enough to not be forced to stare at Nancy all night) as Chief Hopper stood and went through the plan.

El - now legally Jane Hopper but insisted everyone here keep calling her El when it was just them - would start school at the end of August just like the rest of the kids was the key point, which got everyone to smile and the kids to actively cheer.

"Yeah... yeah we are all thrilled. Now comes the hard part" the bearded man said, just loud enough to be heard over the small crowd, "El's brilliant, but hasn't exactly had eight years of schooling. We have to get her caught up by the end of July when she will take a placement test. I've already explained to the school that she was home schooled, and they've given me some practice placement tests"

As usual it was Nancy who stepped up, just as she did when Hop told her about the Snow Ball a few weeks before "I can tutor her, here or at the cabin or my house, whatever works best for you two"

Hop smile at the offer, but shook his head "I considered that, but frankly with this much material I'm not sure any one of us can go over everything properly while still having our own lives. Instead... I was thinking we all help out, if that works... "

Before he could finish there were half a dozen "Yes" and "Of course we will" and even Steve quickly said "Anything I can do?", and El smiling and clearly a bit overwhelmed as her new family didn't hesitate to support her.

"Alright... so what I am thinking is we divide this up by what everyone is good at. I don't want someone with a C minus in chemistry handling science lessons" her new adoptive father pointed out with his usual dry tone, Nancy and Steve sharing a glance and a laugh despite the still slightly awkward tension between them.

After roughly thirty minutes of discussing everyone's strengths and schedules, the assignments were setup on a pad of yellow paper that Jonathan's mother has produced seemingly from thin air.

Dustin would handle biology, Max chemistry, and Lucas history. Those sessions would all be done at the Byers for now, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings when Hopper would out later on patrol, maybe eventually at the public library once Hopper worked on getting the backstory out there and make sure it was safe. Joyce and Will (who had to do some catching on on school of his own) would both help with her writing and art skills during those visits, and Joyce also added quietly that she would help with certain specific chapters of Biology, which made all of the boys and men in the room look away or blush.

Jonathon and occasionally Steve would visit the cabin after school on Monday and Wednesdays, to handle math, physics, and maybe some music and sports if time allowed, while Sunday afternoons at the cabin would be spent on reading, vocab, and homework or practice tests with the Wheeler siblings. "Both of the Wheelers" Hopper emphasized with a knowing look at Mike as the skinny and quickly growing teen smiled and held El's hand with their fingers interlocking. The schedule left Fridays and Saturday open, either for makeup lessons, homework, or fun with the party though Hopper was working on some fairly strict rules about that as well

Once all of that was settled, the party and their caretakers began making more detailed plans and then drifted off to their various family's homes to celebrate New Year's with their families

Wednesday, January 2nd 1985

As the afternoon sun dipped behind the trees, Jonathan took the now familiar dirt road past Denfield, and pulled his old Ford to a stop, shutting it off and grabbing the bookbag with three different math textbooks and a few worksheets. It was his first time coming to the cabin alone - after the night with Will he had been back to drop off a few things with his mother and brought Nancy for the Snow Ball dress fitting - and also his first time alone with Jane/El ever.

Walking carefully over the frosted ground and past the tripwire, looking around again to make sure he wasn't being watched or followed, he knocked on the door three times, once, and then twice again before saying gently "Hey, it's Jonathan" just as he heard the locks click and the door swing open to let him in from the freezing cold.

The young girl he was here to see was relaxing on the sofa, some cheesy soap opera on the TV, but she looked over with her wide brown eyes and locked the door behind him. "Hello" she greeted him quietly, and then as if going off a script Chief Hopper had forced her to memorize added stiffly, but not unkindly, "Would you like something to eat or drink?"

Glancing into the small kitchen he couldn't help notice the hot chocolate mix, and set down his bag before saying "How about I fix us both some cocoa, while you get started on this first worksheet?". This got a smile and nod, and the TV turned itself off as she got up to sit at the kitchen table where he was setting out a worksheet and a pencil for her. "Alright, this has 50 problems. They get harder as you go down, the last few are actually the stuff Nancy and I are working on in high school. If you don't know how to do something that's fine, just leave it blank. This is just to see what you already know. Understand?"

"Yes" El replied softly, looking over the sheet before filling in the first answer to a simple subtraction problem.

Jonathan moved away, getting two mugs of cocoa ready in the somewhat awkward silence of the cabin, watching from a distance as the curly haired girl wearing slightly ill-fitting flannel worked her

way down the problems. Noticing a record player against the wall by the CB radio, he walked over and looked through the records... clearly all bought by the Chief, not El, as it was a decent collection if the last time you went to a record store was fifteen years ago.

"Want some music? It always helps me focus" he asks, feeling quite nervous at being for once the more talkative person in a room. "Yes. That's Hop's music" she answered without looking up, though thankfully did not attempt to put a record in for herself.

Settling for some Jim Croce, which brought a smile to El's face and a tapping of her feet, Jonathan sat on the other side of the table and waited patiently and quietly for her to finish as he sipped on the hot treat. When she pushed the paper across the table and took a long sip herself, he looked over her answers. Overall she seemed to have basic arithmetic down pretty well, but didn't try anything close to algebra or word problems... though that likely was more due to reading and vocabulary issues... and at least this preliminary quiz would probably put her in the 4th or 5th grade for math. Not a bad start at all, though as he checked over her work Jonathan couldn't help noticing the worried look in her big brown eyes.

Meeting her gaze, he smiled slightly and said "You did pretty good El"

She nodded and softly asked "Not stupid?" and the older teen quickly assured her "No. Very smart", reaching out to squeeze her hand like he would Will before even thinking about it, but when the girl smiled at him he didn't pull away and quickly understood how everyone from Mike Wheeler to Jim Hopper ended up wanting to protect this girl.

"Alright, so I think I know what we need to work on, though I will discuss with Nancy" he finally said after a moment, pulling a worn old textbook out and flipping to the right chapter for what he wanted to review today "But for now let's talk about order of operations"

When she tried to read the book upside down, Jonathan realized this wasn't quite going to work and so they moved to the couch with the book in his lap as he explained the correct order to do math in. His arm wrapped loosely around her as she leaned in, and he suddenly remembered his reaction when his mother first told him she was

pregnant as a little boy: he wanted a sister. He wasn't sure why at the time, but looking back he realized it was he subconsciously knew Lonnie could never accuse a daughter of being weird for not liking sports or guns.

After going over it again and showing her a few examples from the textbook El seemed to understand the idea of how to do things in order, and when he handed her the problem sheet again, the ones she got wrong because of this she quickly corrected. "Perfect" he said, giving her a big smile and a high five as he wonders if this is what it's like having a baby sister... though Lonnie would have hated her honestly and curiosity and loyalty, which only made Jonathan love her that much more.

Hearing Hopper's truck pull up in the quiet woods outside, he closed the math book and handed it to her. "Look this over when you have time, and let me know if you have any questions when I am back next week. No actual homework this time, but I will bring some new problems for you to work on next time... and some music you might like better than Hop's old tunes"

El grinned and took the book back to her room even as Hopper gave the secret knock and was let in. Dropping off some frozen food in the kitchen, he asked Jonathan "How did it go?"

"Pretty good", the high schooler answered as he got his stuff together and looked over the dinners and Eggos, silently wondering just how many Karen Wheeler casseroles this cabin would get if she found out about the kid living here secretly. "She's got a good understanding of the basics. Should be no trouble getting her caught up to Will's level by the summer... and might have time for a few cooking lessons too" he added, the last part with a guarded smile. Hopper glanced over at him as he put their meals in the fridge and gave a vague grunt that might have been approval, a laugh, or a dismissal.

El and her tutor said goodbye with a smile and a quick hug, and Jonathan nodded to the chief before shutting the door behind him and heading down the stairs and back to his car. Checking the time he decided to swing by the Wheelers, to update his girlfriend and make sure his little brother got home safe as another snow flurry started falling.

As he drove through the increasingly dark evening, somehow Jonathan knew 1985 would be a pretty good year.

3. First Date

Summary for the Chapter:

Jonathan goes to pickup his girlfriend for a date, and has a surprise he hopes she will enjoy.

6:27 PM on Friday, December 7th, 1984

Jonathan had never been so nervous when pulling up to the two-story house on the Maple Street cul-de-sac as he was tonight. Though he and Nancy had been... more than friends... for over a month, they had never actually gone out on a date.

He had come over to study, to catch up on the days he missed in early November. She had come over for movie nights at the Byers residence. They had fallen asleep in each other's beds, and of course the memory of that night at Murray's would never leave his mind. She had come over for dessert on Thanksgiving, and he had driven her, Will, and Mike to the mall that weekend for some shopping for their parents and friends for Christmas... which was when they realized the slight gap in their relationship so far when Mike mentioned wanting to take El to the new Mexican place near the mall sometime.

So here he was, wearing his nicest button up shirt and jacket, and suddenly nervous about spending time with Nancy despite everything they had been though. But he managed to park the car, checking his pockets again before getting out and walking up to the door to ring the bell like a proper visitor... not just barging into the basement or sneaking into her window.

Of course, the downside of entering that way became readily apparent when it was Karen, not Nancy, Wheeler that opened the door and smiled at him, "Come on in Jonathan. Nancy is almost ready... "

The teen nodded and followed her into the foyer, nodding towards Mr Wheeler in his usual spot, barely looking up from the news.

"It is so nice that you are taking Nancy out on a proper date" Mrs Wheeler said, smiling up at him in her usual friendly way. It was somewhat funny that this was so awkward... as prior to last November, he had probably spent more time talking with the matriarch of the Wheeler clan as the rest of the family combined, from drop offs and pickups and random encounters at the store. She and her mother were old friends, though they hadn't spoken much after starting their families, and had been delighted when Mike and Will started hanging out.

Jonathan merely nodded and said softly "I just hope she enjoys it" as he checked his jacket pockets for the tenth time since he left the house, confirming the two tickets were still in there.

"I am sure she will love whatever it is you have planned. And now that you two are dating, you really must come over for dinner. Maybe even your mother and Will as well? It would be great to have our entire families together" Karen suggested, reminding him just how kind the older lady really was. Even when Will was gone, she was the one adult he knew that had shown up to help... excluding Hopper of course... and at least once a month since then she sent over a casserole or a few of Mike's clothes as he outgrew them. Jonathan had always struggled a bit with the fine line between pity and genuine kindness, but knowing how Mike had taken in a quiet girl with shaved hair and everything Nancy had done with and for him it was clear the Wheeler children truly cared about those less fortunate and they had obviously learned that from someone.

And it sure as the Upside Down wasn't from Ted Wheeler... who appeared to have fallen asleep with a guest in his foyer.

Before Jonathan could reply, Nancy came down the stairs. Given the weather, she was dressed in boots, dark blue jeans, and a soft red-ish sweater, but had her hair up and curled and a bright smile as she said "Ready" and Mrs Wheeler turned to hug her daughter and reminded her gently "Home by 11 PM at the latest. I would prefer 10:30 even with nothing planned tomorrow"

The two teens both nodded, though Nancy still didn't know the plans for tonight, and as he held the door open for his girlfriend Jonathan quickly let her mother know "I would love to come over sometime. I

will see if my Mom and Will can come too" before escorting Nancy to his car and opening the door for her, a gesture he rarely got to do.

Getting behind the wheel, they headed out, chatting about their families even as Nancy insisted on knowing where they were going... especially as they left Hawkins. Heading to the next real town up the highway, one nearly three times as big, he refused to give up anything. Pulling into a nice Italian restaurant (one that Mom had been two times with Bob and loved) along the main road just in time for their 7:15 reservation, he merely said "Time to eat" and made sure he still had the tickets in his pocket.

He got a lasagna and she the chicken alfredo and they held hands while waiting for their food. Despite the ever present doubts about if he was good enough, this date was going incredibly well and he couldn't take his eyes off of Nancy as she discussed her dozen options for college... including Columbia which was finally taking women. "Very near NYU" she mentioned, blushing slightly and he merely nodded and smiled as he assured her "You will get into whatever school you want", the idea that they might go to the big city together to much... to good... to process right now, given they had only been together a few weeks.

After eating they walked down the the main street through the downtown area, Nancy's slender arm interlocked with his allowing him to guide her to the fairly small performance hall. It held mostly community events, but also occasionally traveling shows including the few live concerts he had gone to. This weekend though was a different sort of performance, and as Nancy glanced up at the marquee and read out loud "The Nutcracker - performed by the Indiana Ballet Company" he pulled out the two tickets for the 8:00 showing that he had bought late on Monday night and showed them to her as he smiled and said softly "Hope this works for a real date".

Nancy turned and her jaw dropped, her blue eyes going wide as she looked up at him "Wait... this was the surprise? Jonathan... " and trailed off before hugging him tight. "This is amazing" she said into his ear, before laughing a bit and adding "You're setting a very high bar for yourself Byers" before pulling back and kissing him tenderly on the lips.

Together they went inside, and though Jonathan didn't enjoy the show itself all that much, even less than the recitals Nancy had danced in and he had taken pictures of in middle school, watching Nancy enjoy herself was worth every penny.

Notes for the Chapter:

Had an idea for including a bit of Karen Wheeler interacting with Jonathan, and I think it works as a good entry for the first day of Jancy Fic Week (<https://jancyficweek.tumblr.com/>) - Anything Goes

4. Bringing Home A Stray

Summary for the Chapter:

Jonathan runs into a party member and is, as usual, a good big brother... but he may come to regret the consequences...

It was somehow below freezing and raining... something Jonathan's knowledge of physics said was impossible... as he finally was ready to leave the theater a full hour late on a Saturday night. Somehow the favor in the projection room that would take "twenty minutes... tops... and I promise I won't call you in on Sunday no matter what" from his boss had take 55 minutes. But now he was in his car, heater on full blast, trying to figure out how the current weather was physically possible as he waited till he could no longer see his breath before driving home.

He made a note to ask Dustin next time they ran into each other as he put the car in gear and started heading home, driving slowly down the wet roads of Hawkins, the streetlights not nearly bright enough to counter the thick rain coming down at nearly eleven at night. His latest mix tape was turned down low as he focus on driving, not enjoying the ride as he normally would.

It was a good thing too, because otherwise he would not have seen the green jacket and curly red hair hiding by a tree on the left hand side of the road. Slamming on his brakes, he put the car in park and rolled down his window, calling out "Max? Is that you?"

The younger teen glanced up, meeting his gaze and looking like she might bolt away but nodding, forcing Jonathan to ask the rather obvious follow up "Umm... what are you doing out here? It's nearly midnight... you must be freezing in that jacket"

She only shrugged and looked away, and the older teen gestured towards her "Listen, get in the car... ", a sick feeling in his stomach that this exactly is what he'd have done at her age when Lonnie was at his worst... if he hadn't had to look after Will. He wasn't there when Billy had come to pick her up the night with Will and the Gate,

but he'd gotten the story and picked up a few other hints about her life at home from the boys, though the girl herself had never opened up to him... in fact they probably hadn't said more than a dozen full sentences directly to each other over the past couple of months. She walked over, in front of his headlights which showed her shivering in the cold before she got in.

"Thanks Jonathan" she said softly, even as he reached into the back and tossed an old blanket at her, before asking again "What are you doing out in this weather so late? Where's your skateboard?" He did his best to ask gently, seeing her worry, but also making it clear that he expected some sort of answer.

He got one that was simple and to the point "Neil, my... stepdad... " but she trailed off before giving details.

Looking her over closer, he didn't see any obvious injuries but asked "Did he hurt you? Do we need to find Hopper or a doctor?" and added quickly, as calmly as he could "Be honest with me Max... I... I just want to help"

She finally spoke a full sentence, her usual bad ass Madmax demeanor nowhere to be found, tears in her eyes as she explained "No. He just yelled a lot, and my mom was out. He had stopped and I went to bed.... but then he started screaming at the TV for not working and I... thought.... I... just freaked out and ran"

Jonathan nodded, knowing exactly what that was like, and suggested "Sometimes it's worse not actually getting hit. The fear... that anything you might do will set them off... is worse than being slapped or shoved. Not knowing what to say... if you can do your homework... or if you can eat or... ", trailing off awkwardly as his own memories rose in his mind and then faded.

Max's eyes met his in confusion, and she got a wry smile from him as he added "Will doesn't talk to you guys much about... our father.... does he?" and the confusion was instantly replaced with understanding as she replied "Only that he's gone. And he doesn't mind", pulling the blanket tighter around herself.

Putting the car back into gear Jonathan started driving, and for a

moment his passenger seemed to think he was taking her home but he kept going past that turn, continuing on to his home on the outskirts of town. He turned the volume up after a song change, letting Blondie fill the somewhat awkward silence before he pulled up to his house.

By the time they were both out of the car, the front door was already opened and he suddenly remembered that he hadn't called to tell his mom he'd be late. Normally she didn't worry about him even one tenth as much as Will, but well over an hour late in this weather and even the seventeen year old son had his mother worried. Before she could ask anything or scold him, she saw Max and raised her eyebrows in confusion and he quickly explained "Lonnie and her stepdad would get along"

That was all it took to wipe away any confusion or anger at him for being late and she embraced the shivering girl and let them inside, offering "How about you take a nice hot shower and I'll get you something to sleep in sweetheart" as she guided the still shivering redhead to the bathroom even though she knew the layout of the Byers house from the night everyone had stayed over. His mother went to bed after leaving some clothes in the bathroom and saying goodnight to her eldest, smiling as she whispered "I'm so proud of you" and hugged him.

After the ladies left, Jonathan locked up the door and went to the kitchen, warming up some water for hot chocolate and toasting a couple of Eggo's from the *whenever El visits* stash as he heard the water running. Going to his room, he changed into sweatpants and a loose t-shirt to sleep in, grabbing a spare pillow and tossing it on the sofa as Max finished her shower.

When she came out, he offered her an Eggo and a mug of hot chocolate before saying "You can use my bed Max, I'm good on the couch" as they sat together in the living room with the snacks on the cheap old coffee table.

"Thanks, for everything" she said as quickly as she could, balancing being grateful with not wanting to be vulnerable much better than Jonathan usually did, and curled up on a chair in his mother's flannel nightgown and pants. After a few bites of food she smiled slightly and

asked "Is Nancy okay with you bringing girls home to sleep in your bed?", teasing him like she would Mike or any of the boys. Save perhaps Will, who everyone was just a bit more gentle with from what Jonathan could see... which he appreciated though he also knew Will didn't want to be babied... but nobody could help treating him and El just a bit nicer than the rest of their party.

"No more than Lucas will mind us having Eggo's at midnight" he responded out dryly, having taken their picture at the Snow Ball and seen how they almost always sat next to each other when the party gathered since then, drawing a chuckle and a blush that matched her red hair to the girls cheeks. Turning on the TV and putting a rerun of SNL on quiet enough to not wake up his mother who had to work in the morning, he and Max laughed together at a few of the sketches till she started yawning and he shooed her off to bed.

The next morning Will was surprised to see Max waiting at the breakfast table, but greeted her warmly as Jonathan served them both eggs and hashbrowns and the two younger kids watched a movie, calling up their friends to chat since nobody wanted to travel by bike in this weather. When he finally took Max home around lunch time, after she assured him it was alright and her Mom would be back today, he told her to call him either on the phone or Will through her Supercom the boys had gotten her for Christmas. "Anytime, day or night. I'll come and pick you up... or send Nancy or Steve if I can't be there" he said, adding with a smile "Promise", knowing what the word mean to all these kids.

He meant it, and would never regret helping her out... though he did regret the side effects... the consequences of bringing her home... because it inspired his mom to start hosting ***Girl's Nights*** at their house every couple of weeks.

Notes for the Chapter:

Sorry for the gap, was thinking about doing a V-Day post last week but got too busy IRL and wanted to get to this chapter, one of the ones I had been thinking about and looking forward to from the moment I started this.

Author's Note:

Hope someone liked this, will add more chapters / scenes in the future.

If there's any specific Jonathan & "X" friendship pairings or scenarios you'd like to see explored let me know.